2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

CHAPTER X

THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF A SETTLEMENT

Introduction

621 A TALE settlement is a miniature of the whole society, and reveals all the basic principles of the social structure. No two settlements are identical in topography, shape, size, or social composition; but all have the same social form, based on the same principles. Yet it is no easy task to describe a settlement as the natives see it. It cannot be isolated from neighbouring units of the same kind by inspection; for though it is locally fixed it is not territorially circumscribed. Its structure is unintelligible without reference to the lineage system, but ecological exigencies and political and ritual ties and cleavages play an important part in it as well.

361 The anatomy of a settlement appears in fullest relief during the dry
● 221 season. Then the homesteads stand out starkly against the dun background of bare earth or the glare of rocks and boulders piled up in red-grey masses in the hilly areas. The foot-paths winding between the homesteads scar the land as if etched into it by generations of feet. Every shade tree in front of a homestead is an inviting landmark. Sacred groves, looking temptingly cool when the sun is high, are unmistakable. The water-holes, pits, and ditches, flooded beyond recognition in the latter part of the rainy season, can easily be distinguished. The boundaries of farm-plots, overgrown with crops and weeds during the rains, are now clearly visible. The landscape is a map of the social relations of the people. This is the season, too, when life goes on largely in the open. There is leisure for gossip and conversation; for paying visits, strolling in the market, going a-courting, making long journeys, dancing in the moonlight; for hunting and fishing drives; there is time also, and the necessary supplies, for the performance of funeral ceremonies and other ritual activities. It is in such events that the structure of Tale society is most vividly actualized.

Types of Settlement and Distribution of Population

361 Two main types of settlements are found: those of ancient habitation (*tɛŋkɔrɔg*, old country), covering all the centre of the country, especially on and around the Tong Hills, and including the majority of the Tallensi; and those of recent foundation (*tɛŋpaalɔg*, new country), towards the periphery of this area. Though the basic plan is the same, the principles on which a settlement is built operate with different emphasis in each type.

361 Neither territorial extent nor density of aggregation affects the basic
621 plan of a settlement. The range of variation is very great. Moreover, processes of expansion and contraction continuously alter the extent of a settlement. Thus, Yamɔlɔg and Tongo are ancient settlements of the same general structure, though the latter is four or five times the size of

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

feeling of politico-ritual difference between them. It is the same within each cluster. The elders inaugurate the Festival season with many sacrifices asking the ancestors and the Earth to prevent fighting from breaking out between the young men, in spite of the truce, and they always depute a number of reliable young men to keep a good look-out during the dances lest unruly spirits stir up trouble. Thus the greater solidarity is built up on the lesser solidarities; and this principle applies throughout the social system.

The rhythm of Tale social life is contained within an annual cycle. It swings between two poles. For most of the year the sectional interests of lineage and clan dominate the pattern of collective life. But for one month the greater solidarity of the whole society prevails.

In relation to the mechanisms of unity and equilibrium Tale warfare appears as a negative sanction that reinforces their effects. It was the obverse of these mechanisms, the polar opposite of the idea of unity, arising out of the very same balance of social forces that makes that unity possible. Both in time and at a given time the equilibrium of Tale political life swung (and still swings) between two poles: on the one hand, the extraordinarily consistent and precise differentiation of social segments; on the other, the strong sense of unity created by the religious bonds of the society.

War or, more often, the threat of war was the most drastic means of bringing to a head and working off the frictions that inevitably arose from the action of the principle of social differentiation of corporate units; its effect, however, was to bring the opposite principle into action, and thus it served to strengthen the forces of social cohesion in the society at large.

Equilibrium and Solidarity within the Clan and Lineage

The pattern of solidarity we have been discussing applies at all levels of Tale social structure. Tensions similar to those we have discerned in the corporate relations between clans underlie corporate relations within clans and maximal lineages. Centrifugal tendencies and centripetal tendencies pull against one another. Conflicts within corporate units tend to follow the lines of lineage and local segmentation. They take the form of opposition between the solidarity of the segment and the wider solidarity of the lineage or clan. And the greater the relative autonomy of the segment, the deeper does the conflict tend to be. Hence conflicts in a composite clan tend to go deeper than conflicts in a genealogically unitary group such as a sub-clan of Mosuor biis. But, as in the social structure at large, the bonds of common interest, of mutual dependence in ritual and secular matters, and of local unity tend to prevail in the long run. However deep a breach may be, the dissidents never repudiate membership of the larger unit, for this would be tantamount to repudiating the ancestors. The ancestor cult is the supreme sanction of lineage and clan solidarity. Thus, at the best, conflicts are resolved by the eventual restoration of the *status quo ante*. At the worst, a new balance is struck between the centrifugal tendencies of lineage segmentation and the centripetal emphasis of the lineage structure as a whole backed by the ancestor cult. It is in this way that the structure of a lineage or clan is

4: Fortes and Fortes E-5 (1934-1936) 1936
FE11 Tallensi FE11

The climate of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast has two well-marked seasons, a rainy season (*seug*) and a dry season (*nun*). The rainy season is the period of intense agricultural activity and lasts from April to October; the dry season, when agriculture sinks into the background of social interest, from November to March. We shall set out the cycle of agricultural and food economy month by month, beginning with April, the first month of the rains.[1]

PRODUCTIVE CYCLE	FOOD CYCLE
APRIL: First planting-rain fell on March 26, and early millet (*naara*) with some cow-peas and *nuri* was planted in the valley settlements. Rain again in mid-April enabled most people to plant early millet, &c. Women sowed their vegetable patches; *naggena*, *hibiscus* (*ma'ana*, *bet* and *beris*), marrow (*wok*—planted by only a few women) and other vegetables. Hoeing begun; but not more than one day in three devoted to agriculture. Communal fishing expeditions.	Food stores very low in average households and being rationed. Many dependent upon supplementary sources of supply. People buying grain abroad for re-sale. Ample food supplies in market and many buying grain. Market-prices average. Children gleaning ground-nuts.[2] Wild fruits—shea (*taamr*), *ximenia americana* (*lieg*) and especially dawa-dawa powder (*dobugm*)—being consumed to stave off hunger.[3]

[1] The Tallensi have a lunar calendar, but we are following the European calendar to simplify the exposition. All dates given refer to 1934.

[2] Ground-nut gleaning (*nyuh*) is a regular pursuit of children, adolescents, and even adults of households with small supplies of ground-nuts. After the ground-nuts have been lifted any one may come and scratch with a hoe for those left in the ground. Thus little groups of boys and girls, from infancy to adolescence, wander about in the fields near their homes scratching with old hoes for the ground-nuts, which they collect and eat. Early in the dry season these ground-nuts are regarded as snacks. When the dry season reaches its end, however, they become scarcer but are searched for more eagerly as a measure to stop the pangs of hunger between one meal and the next, often twenty-four hours later.

[3] Shea fruits are collected by the women throughout this season, mainly from trees on bush farms belonging to their compound. Dawa-dawa powder is more difficult to come by as the trees are jealously watched by the owners, who are in some areas the chiefs *ex-officio* and in others heads of lineages. Dawa-dawa pods are thus often obtained by gift, purchase, or exchange from the owners, or in the market. Every part of the fruit is of great value—the floury powder is eaten, the seeds collected and turned into *kpolug*, the husks of the pod used to prepare *am*, the liquid with which the walls and floors of compounds are waterproofed.

4: Fortes and Fortes E-5 (1934-1936) 1936
• FE11 Tallensi FE11

PRODUCTIVE CYCLE	FOOD CYCLE
MAY: Rains continue erratically. Early millet planted in the stony and hilly areas. Others interplanting guinea-corn and late millet on compound farms and some ground-nuts. Work on bush farms preparatory to planting commenced. Tempo of agricultural activity increasing rapidly.	Food stores deplenished and severe rationing. 'Hunger' (*kɔm*) commences. Poorer households suffer two or three days' hunger a week, living on vegetable soup, ground-nuts and wild fruits. Householders send their wives to purchase grain abroad for consumption and re-sale if they have money. Many selling live stock bit by bit to buy grain in market. Prices of all commodities rising. Visits being paid to relations in more fortunate areas to get some grain.[1]
JUNE: Height of agricultural season. Men completely absorbed in hoeing	Peak of 'hunger' reached. Granaries empty among poorer households.

[1] The following case-record will illustrate more vividly than explanations the state of affairs in May: Baripeta and his adolescent brother had dependent upon them their mother, the former's two wives, and one infant. Baripeta was known as one of the best young farmers in the settlement. His ortho-cousin, head of the compound, farmed independently. At the end of April Baripeta's supplies were so low that he had to purchase small quantities of grain and send his brother to a relative living in the richer Mampuru country to beg some grain. By May 9 the household was living on shea fruit and vegetable soup, with a meal of porridge every third day, scraped together by the women. Baripeta obtained 2*s*. and sent his brother and senior wife to Mampurugu to buy grain, he himself being unable to abandon his fields just then. They returned (May 15) bringing about 60 lbs. of guinea-corn. After 2 days of complete starvation the household fed adequately though frugally for over a week. As he had to give some of the grain to the head of the compound, Baripeta was left with about 50 lb. of it. A small quantity dribbled away in gifts to other kinsfolk who came to 'beg'. Thus the five adults and the infant used, say, 40 lb. of grain in about 8 to 10 days. Baripeta sent his brother to 'greet' their brother-in-law in the Nabte country and obtain some grain from him. Thus, alternately starving for a couple of days and having enough for a few days, the household carried on until the harvest in July. This case is typical of dozens; but many households were not reduced to such straits, especially those of heads of compounds or elders with large compound farms and several younger men assisting them.

Ground-nuts are chewed all the year round, if available, to stave off hunger, but are never regarded as a substitute for porridge, the real food. But a family with a good ground-nut harvest never starves. There is always a sale for ground-nuts, which figure as contributions in all funeral ceremonies when large groups of people gather and sit about for a whole day and chew them to keep off hunger.

4: Fortes and Fortes E-5 (1934-1936) 1936
FE11 Tallensi FE11

PRODUCTIVE CYCLE	FOOD CYCLE
and weeding, planting guinea-corn and late millet on bush farms, rice, ground-nuts and minor crops. Hiring labour for help in hoeing and weeding.[2] Women plucking *nangema*.	Much live stock sold or bartered for grain very cheaply; grain scarce and dear. Much ground-nuts for sale.[1] Small groups of children wander about hungry, feeding on wild fruits and small animals they find near the settlements. Towards the end of the month many people are staunching their hunger by cutting the ripe or half ripe heads of early millet which they roast on the embers and nibble at.
JULY: Early millet harvested by those who planted first on valley land.[3]	Early millet eaten by those who harvest. Relatives from the later-

[1] People tend to hoard their ground-nuts until about June, when the price rises to 1*s.* a small basketful, as many require seed then. The proceeds are invested in grain. Grain prices at this time are about twice the average price of roughly ½*d.* a lb.

[2] In June even those whose grain supplies have lasted well begin to feel the pinch. One reason for this is that a considerable amount of grain is expended in feeding and recompensing hired *kpaarip* (lit. hoe-men). These are Nankansi and Builsa who come to Tale-land to seek a few days' work, since their settlements are in a worse plight than those of the Tale. They insist on being paid in grain or ground-nuts which they can take home. As they have to be given flour-water (*zoukuor*) in the middle of the day and a good meal at night besides a calabash of 4 or 5 lb. of grain per day to carry home, they make considerable inroads on grain supplies. At this time of the year only those with grain to spare engage *kpaarip*, later even poorer men do so. It may mean economizing on one's own food at the time, but in this way, say the Tale farmers, one can get a large bush farm hoed or weeded expeditiously, and thus make up the grain expended twice over.

[3] Early millet is a catch-crop and the Tallensi realize this. Its function is to tide over the period of waiting until the main crops of guinea-corn and late millet are harvested. Hence the necessity for a piece of compound farm if a unit is to be fully independent.

The Tallensi say that early millet normally lasts for two months, and our observations prove this to be the case. When the millet is brought in by the women, the heads are spread out to dry and sorted into two lots, the good heads (*naarsour*) and the bad heads (*naarbist*). The best of the former are selected for seed, threshed and stored in pots. This is the first task, as it is considered shameful to be without seed at planting time. The bad heads are eaten first, the good millet stored in the granary and eaten later. For a few days there is no restraint. Small children run about all day, nibbling at heads of millet which have been quickly roasted in hot embers. But as soon as the head of the unit of food economy has carried out the thanksgiving sacrifices which permit him, too, to eat of the new crop, he takes control.

4: Fortes and Fortes E-5 (1934-1936) 1936
FE11 Tallensi FE11

PRODUCTIVE CYCLE	FOOD CYCLE
Hoeing and weeding of compound and bush farms in full swing. Some still planting subsidiary crops. Poultry breeding begins.	planting areas come to beg grain.[1] Wild fruits still eaten and hunger prevalent in late-planting areas. Ground-nuts, beginning to ripen, plucked and chewed as snacks.
AUGUST: Late planters harvest early millet. Invited collective labour (*kpaarip*) for hoeing and weeding coming to fore, but hired labour still in evidence.[2] Fresh hibiscus leaves used in soup.	Almost everybody has early millet; hunger appeased for a time.

[1] The different settlements harvest at such different times corresponding to their times of planting that more than a month elapses between the beginning of the harvest at one end of Tale-land, and its conclusion at the other end. This gives rise to a system of reciprocities the effect of which is to cancel out the lag to some extent. People from the late-planting settlements visit their relatives in the early-planting settlements as soon as these begin to harvest and receive gifts of early millet from them. Women, especially, go thus to visit their parental homes, and no man would send his daughter or sister away empty-handed. Later, when the early-harvesting settlements begin to reach the end of their early millet stores, the process is reversed. The Tallensi never think of this in terms of economic interchange or reciprocal payments. They insist that *A* gives to *B* freely and without expectation of return because *B* is *A*'s daughter. Later, when *B*'s husband harvests his millet he will send some to *A* freely—because *A* is his father-in-law. It is significant that these mutual 'good turns' always occur between people of different settlements, not between patrilineal kin of the same settlement.

[2] Soon after early millet has been brought in, the elders and others who have had a good crop begin to 'invite hoemen' (*pook kpaarip*). An elder sends round to all the compounds of his section (a sub-division of a clan settlement) requesting the young men to come out and weed his farms, compound or bush, for him on the following day. As no one would be so ill-mannered or so negligent of a kinsman's duties as to refuse, some 20 or 30 young men turn out next day. The one who issued the invitation recompenses them with two meals, flour-water (*zomkuom*) at noon and a lavish cooked meal at night. Thus commences a round of collective weeding, as every farmer who can afford the 20 or 30 lb. of grain and the meat for feeding them in turn invites his kinsmen and neighbours to come and weed for him. Others have to hire foreign labour to the best of their capacity. The Tallensi account for this institution firstly on the ground that it is only by such a mass attack that the rapidly growing weeds can be kept under, and secondly on the ground that it relieves the strain of unremitting toil in the fields and increases the crops.

Gifts to relatives and feeding collective labour are a considerable strain on a man's granary at this time, though, in the long run, much of it comes back. Reliable informants told us that half of their total crop was expended thus, leaving them short of millet in September.

4: Fortes and Fortes E-5 (1934-1936) 1936
FE11 Tallensi FE11

PRODUCTIVE CYCLE	FOOD CYCLE
SEPTEMBER: Harvesting ground-nuts and other subsidiary crops (roots and legumes) begun. Hoeing and weeding of bush farms continue. Women plucking green ocro and burning early millet stalks for *bakaa*.[2] Ritual festivals commence.	Those who harvested in July already reaching end of supplies of early millet, and resort to market and relatives.[1] Early millet very expensive in market. New ground-nuts (partly green), roots, and legumes supplementing diet largely.
OCTOBER: Harvesting of guinea-corn, rice, root crops, legumes, &c., general. *Neri* lifted. Women drying and storing vegetables.[3]	Food becoming plentiful. Price of grain falling rapidly in market. Cooked food cheap and plentiful in market. Marriage season begins.[4]
NOVEMBER: Harvesting late millet on bush farms, cow-peas and Bambara beans. Women burning valley grass for *ziem*. Children gleaning ground-nuts in play, not because of hunger. Height of ritual festival season.	All kinds of food plentiful. Harvest festivals, during which enormous quantities of food are consumed and circulated and many animals sacrificed, giving the maximum meat supply of the year, and root crops including purchased yams especially in demand for the festivals. All foodstuffs abundant and cheap at market.[5]

[1] Early millet appears in some quantity in the market only at this time; but the prices are about twice the average price of grain. There is some aversion to selling early millet on account of its function in the food cycle.

[2] *Bakaa* is not only used in cooking, but is also chewed with tobacco; hence, there is always a sale for it. The women collect the stalks from their husband's fields, but the *bakaa* is their own property.

[3] With the guinea-corn harvest comes the season of plenty. The tempo of social life and the configuration of social interests changes as completely as the landscape and the climatic conditions. On the economic side attention is at first directed to the selection of seed for storage and the drying and stacking of the grain in the granaries. Women dry and store all kinds of vegetables, especially the much-valued ocro.

[4] The ritual and social activities which dominate this season all require great expenditure of foodstuffs. Marriage involves a period of courtship, during which the suitor brings frequent gifts of guinea-fowls and tobacco to the girl's father and mother. A few days after marriage, the bridegroom sends a large basket of grain and several guinea-fowls to his mother-in-law, and finally has to supply several chickens and guinea-fowls for the legal formalities. The transfer of bride-wealth cattle does not affect the domestic economy materially. Altogether, a man is fortunate if his expenditure is not more than 15 to 20 birds, a block of tobacco (costing 1*s.* or more), a couple of baskets of grain, and a few shillings in money. The girl's family gains correspondingly.

[5] The Harvest and New Year Festivals are celebrated in November. Fowls,

4: Fortes and Fortes E-5 (1934-1936) 1936
FE11 Tallensi FE11

PRODUCTIVE CYCLE	FOOD CYCLE
DECEMBER: Agricultural work over.	Height of ritual season: funeral ceremonies, children's dedication ceremonies, many marriages; all involving consumption of live stock and grain, in sacrifices, as cooked food, and beer.[1]
JANUARY: Period of secondary activities such as housebuilding, cut-	Grain rationing again begins. Grain and other foodstuffs, including im-

guinea-fowls, sheep, goats, and dogs are slaughtered in profusion as sacrifices to ancestral and magical shrines. Beer (*daam*) made of malted grain is boiled, though in small quantities; much food is cooked to receive kinsfolk who call upon and greet each other. Recently married men send baskets of sweet potatoes, frafra potatoes, and yams to greet their parents-in-law. The Festivals last only a few days, but the tubers and animals are consumed over a period of some weeks.

[1] In this period, too, are celebrated all those clan and family religious ceremonies in which animal sacrifices and cooked food and beer play a great part. Indeed, these rites are often postponed for several years until a sufficiently good harvest enables enough supplies to be accumulated. We have seen a cow, a donkey, about 15 sheep and goats, and a large number of fowls and guinea-fowls slaughtered at the funeral ceremonies for a very venerable elder. We were assured by his sons, who were responsible for these ceremonies, that they had used up the whole of a large supply of guinea-corn in the preparation of ritual beer and food and in providing hospitality for throngs of guests. At such a funeral the deceased's cognatic and affinal kin bring obligatory food-contributions of cooked porridge, sheep, goats, and birds. So great were these contributions at one funeral that two or three basketfuls of porridge had to be thrown away as it turned sour. Funerals are extreme cases of the lavish utilization of food at this time of the year; and only three or four big funerals take place in any settlement in one season. Most funerals require a much smaller expenditure of live stock and grain than that made at an elder's funeral.

This is not the place to discuss the types of ritual and ceremonial situations in which 'things' (*bon*)—the Tale concept which covers every type of property—are consumed. In a good season there will be a tremendous spate of them; in a poor season only urgent rites will be performed. A word, however, must be said about beer, the most important ritual substance apart from the animals and flour used in sacrifices. Beer is cooked (*doŋ-*) by women, malted grain (*kpeŋa*) of guinea-corn or millet being issued to them by the man at whose request it is made. In the average compound beer is never cooked except for ritual purposes which may be twice or thrice a year. Chiefs and headmen, who always have a surplus of grain often, and elders occasionally keep a supply of beer on hand for guests. Tale women never make beer for sale in the markets; indeed, any man would be horrified at the suggestion that his hard-won grain should be used in this way. The Tallensi are a sober people on the whole.

4: Fortes and Fortes E-5 (1934-1936) 1936
FE11 Tallensi FE11

PRODUCTIVE CYCLE	FOOD CYCLE
ting grass and timber for roofing, handicraft work. Young men begin to go abroad temporarily.[1]	ported maize, plentiful and cheap at market.
FEBRUARY: As in January.	Grain issued for only one meal a day. Many purchasing grain rather than use up their own supplies. Ground-nuts and cow-peas regular and important supplements to cereal food. Women finding grain to augment supplies, by trading, etc. Market supplies still plentiful, prices average.
MARCH: As in February. Sporadic cleaning of fields and hoeing.	Grain supplies sinking and more carefully rationed. Children and women gleaning ground-nuts to stop hunger. People going to Mampuru and Nabte countries to purchase grain for re-sale. Grain still plentiful in market, also other products, e.g. yams (imported).[2]

[1] This month of plenitude marks the peak of the food cycle. Soon supplies diminish again; men who are setting up compounds of their own commence building operations; but almost every compound requires some repairs. House-building and thatching are crafts in which a great many men have no skill. They therefore have to invite (*pook*) neighbours or relatives who have the skill to carry out the repairs for them; and these have to be generously fed in recompense. A new house, again, is built co-operatively with the aid of kinsmen, relatives and friends, who also have to be generously fed.

With this further drain on his grain stores, the head of a unit of food economy has to go warily. Hence in spite of the ample and cheap grain available in the market, he begins to reduce the ration of grain he distributes to his dependants. In February the rationing gets stricter, for it is essential to keep a reserve against the first month of the rains 'to strengthen one' against the greater demands upon one's energy made by agricultural labour. They say this explains why those who can afford it buy grain for immediate consumption. Finally, just before the rains, supplies are sinking to the minimum which will be reached in the month preceeding the early millet harvest, with the usual effect of causing visits to neighbouring areas in search of grain to purchase.

The temporary migration of young men is more fully dealt with in a paper by M. Fortes, 'Culture Contact as a Dynamic Process', *Africa*, ix. 1, 1936.

[2] We have, in the above table, emphasized the place of cereals in the cycle because they constitute the staple food of the Tallensi; and as we are concerned with the domestic economy of food, we have referred to the market only in order

4: Fortes and Fortes E-5 (1934-1936) 1936
FE11 Tallensi FE11

A striking correlation emerges from the above synopsis of the cycle of food economy. It will be seen that domestic food-supplies are at their lowest at the time—recognized as such by the natives—of the most strenuous output of physical labour, i.e. in May–June, and highest when there is least agricultural work. In other words, it would seem that food consumption is inversely correlated with food requirements, if we may assume that more food is needed to sustain the arduous agricultural labour of the rainy season than the leisure months of the dry season. How this affects the working capacity of the natives must be left to the social biologist to determine; it is a type of problem beyond the competence of an ethnographer. The Tallensi have both excellent receptacles and adequate techniques for storing all kinds of food. We have seen grain and ground-nuts produced from granaries or storage baskets (*kusoh*) twelve months after they had been packed, and in perfect condition. Even root crops and legumes, which appear to be more susceptible to damp and weevils, can be stored for a year. Nor, in our estimation, are the Tallensi

to bring out more clearly the fluctuations in domestic supplies. The market is a fundamental economic institution in Tale society, but we have space here only for a cursory comment on its function in relation to our main theme. Every kind of raw foodstuff, from grain to wild fruits and many varieties of cooked food can be purchased in the market. A visit to the market shows at once what the state of the domestic larder is; high prices indicate empty granaries, low prices, plentiful domestic supplies. The cooked food offered in the market illustrates the seasonal variation in supplementary diet very well. As soon as Bambara beans or frafra potatoes are lifted they appear, both raw and cooked, in the market. The food most commonly sold in the market is porridge (*sayabo*), the staple cereal food; but other cereal and pulse confections can be bought there, many kinds being especially prepared for sale, and rarely, if ever, cooked for home consumption. Such are *maasa*—fried millet-cake, *guor* and *kamcha*, both made of flour cow-pea. A number of women carry on a regular trade in these luxury foods and thus reap a steady income. Beer is always on sale in the Tale markets, manufactured and sold by a few regular women traders, all Nankansi as far as we know. Only in the markets have we seen intoxicated men; never at ritual gatherings. The market is also the main supplier of tobacco, which most mature men and many old women chew or smoke, but which only a minority are able to grow for themselves, and of kola nuts, imported from Ashanti by foreign traders, and universally chewed as a stimulant by men, women, and even older children. Curdled milk (*bighihir*), a luxury food, is generally obtained there, too. The market represents the point of contact between the basic subsistence economy of the natives and the money economy which exists side by side with it.

6: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1937 FE11 Tallensi FE11

121 each within the context of the particular type of social situation is specific to it and can be determined only from the analysis of the situation itself. It may differ considerably from its "institutional function" in relation to the culture as a whole. Thus the rules of exogamy viewed in relation to the entire social organization of a people may demonstrably serve to emphasize and preserve the integrity of an unilateral kinship group. But in a particular situation, a man barred from marriage with a woman he desires may enter into an illicit sexual intrigue with her, which may lead to dissension within the kinship group. In such a case the "proximate function" of the rules of exogamy appears to be the very contrary of their "institutional function." This is an hypothetical instance; but it will suffice to illustrate what we mean when we say that the components of any type of social situation are inter-related in a manner specific to it or that it exhibits a definite structure. The aim of the present paper is to analyze the structure of a situation which recurs with some frequency in the life of a tribe recently visited by the writer.

226 221 [805] Among the Tallensi, a tribe of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, the communal fishing expeditions which take place every year are events of this kind. They extend over a period of about a month, between the close of the dry season and the commencement of the heavy rains. During this month which coincides with most of the native lunar month *Sigkpéon* ("Dry rains"), and the European month of April, rain falls sporadically (five times, at varying intervals, in 1934, a dry year) but sufficiently for the sowing of early millet and some of the minor crops. Sowing demands the concentration of all energies of the family for a day or two after a fall of rain; then it is discontinued until the next fall of rain. Besides sowing, other technological and economic activities compete with fishing during this month. House repairs and rebuilding are still in progress and of course the markets, which take place on two days out of three within the tribal area, are in full swing. All these activities are equally shared by men and women, assisted by the children of both sexes.

226 262 Fishing therefore is not an activity of an economic off-season. Its calendrical incidence depends primarily on the technique employed, which is suitable only for shallow pools; and the pools are shallowest at the end of the dry season. It is, also, only indirectly correlated with the diminution in food supplies which becomes general during the "dry rains", since fish, like meat, is valued as a delicacy and never as a substitute for the staple cereal foods. In any case, the catch is usually too small to influence the economy of food supplies materially. Nevertheless, the luxury value of fish furnishes one of the main inducements to join the fishing expeditions.

226 But the greatest attraction of these fishing expeditions to young and old, men and women, is the excitement and thrill they provide, the immediate pleasure of participation in a communal enterprise with the possibility, however remote, of some gain.

133 226 The pools fished lie in the bed of the White Volta River. When the rains cease the water level gradually sinks till eventually only a series of pools divided from one another